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Compilation on Uzbekistan

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a compilation of information contained in reports of treaty bodies and special procedures and other relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies[1–2]

2. Many treaty bodies, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and other United Nations entities recommended that Uzbekistan ratify the remaining core international human rights instruments, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;[3] the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees; the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons; the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;[4] the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court[5] and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).[6]

3. The Committee against Torture urged Uzbekistan to issue a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders, in particular the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.[7] The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recommended that Uzbekistan establish closer cooperation with the United Nations human rights system, including the treaty bodies and special procedures.[8]

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4. During the High Commissioner's visit to Uzbekistan in May 2017,[9] an agreement had been reached for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Regional Office for Central Asia to cover Uzbekistan henceforth.[10] The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion noted that the parliament had approved an action plan on further development of cooperation with OHCHR.[11]

III. National human rights framework[12]

5. The High Commissioner noted that all categories of human rights figured very prominently across the five sets of priorities in the President's Action Strategy (2017–2021). He encouraged Uzbekistan to monitor actual human rights results in the government monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy.[13]

6. The Human Rights Committee was concerned that neither the parliamentary Ombudsperson nor the National Centre for Human Rights appeared to comply with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).[14] The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion recommended that Uzbekistan establish a national human rights institution in full compliance with the Paris Principles.[15]

IV. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Cross-cutting issues

1. Equality and non-discrimination[16]

7. The Human Rights Committee was concerned that the prohibited grounds for discrimination differed from one law to another and that existing legislation did not protect against discrimination on all grounds. It urged Uzbekistan to ensure its legal framework fully and effectively protected against discrimination in all spheres; prohibited direct, indirect and multiple discrimination; contained a comprehensive list of grounds for discrimination; and provided for effective remedies.[17]

8. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended that Uzbekistan define racial discrimination and incorporate all the elements of article 1 of the Convention into its legislation;[18] criminalize the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred and all related acts of violence; prohibit organizations that incited racial discrimination; and recognize racist motive as an aggravating circumstance for all offences.[19]

9. The Human Rights Committee recommended that Uzbekistan combat any form of discrimination or violence against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity; investigate, prosecute and punish such acts; and repeal article 120 of the Criminal Code, which criminalized consensual sexual activities between adult males.[20] In 2016, Uzbekistan replied that it opposed a repeal of article 120 since homosexual relations were one of the causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country and were contrary to the traditions of the peoples of Uzbekistan.[21]

2. Development, the environment, and business and human rights[22]

10. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was concerned at the impact of the Aral Sea ecological disaster on the human rights of ethnic groups living in the area.[23]

3. Human rights and counter-terrorism[24]

11. The Human Rights Committee remained concerned that current antiterrorism legislation contained an overly broad definition of terrorism and terrorist activities, which was reportedly used to prosecute members or suspected members of banned Islamic

movements; and about the legal safeguards for persons suspected of or charged with terrorism or a related crime.[25]

12. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion noted that extremism was often described by the authorities as the main challenge of the country, and used to justify the need for strict State control of religions in the interest of "public security".[26] He indicated that campaigns against terrorism and extremism had included the closure of some mosques and the arrest of Muslims who had not been associated with terrorist or extremist groups and simply sought to practise their religion outside Government-sanctioned ways. He found that there was no clear definition of "extremism", therefore leaving its interpretation overly vague.[27]

B. Civil and political rights

1. Right to life, liberty and security of person[28]

13. The Human Rights Committee remained concerned that the definition of torture in criminal legislation was limited to illegal acts committed with the purpose of coercing testimony and therefore resulted in impunity for other persons.[29] The Committee against Torture remained concerned that article 235 of the Criminal Code restricted torture to law enforcement officials' actions and did not cover acts by other persons acting in an official capacity.[30] The Human Rights Committee urged Uzbekistan to amend its criminal legislation, including article 235.[31] In 2016, Uzbekistan stated that it did not consider it necessary, as a matter of urgency, to amend its legislation, including article 235.[32]

14. The Committee was concerned about reprisals against and intimidation of persons complaining of torture and their family members, the very low rate of prosecution and the prevalence of impunity.[33] The Committee against Torture urged Uzbekistan to conduct prompt, impartial and effective investigations into such allegations and prosecute those responsible.[34] It recommended that Uzbekistan apply a zero-tolerance approach to torture and related impunity.[35]

15. The same Committee was concerned at allegations that some individuals extradited from neighbouring countries had been tortured and others detained incommunicado.[36]

16. The Committee was concerned that the special staff inspection units and parliamentary Ombudsperson had not been effective in combating torture and lacked independence.[37] The Human Rights Committee urged Uzbekistan to establish an independent complaints mechanism while protecting complainants against any form of reprisal.[38] The United Nations country team noted that, further to the acceptance by Uzbekistan of recommendations made during the 2013 review process, the law on the parliamentary Ombudsman had been amended to widen access to complaints mechanisms, allowing citizens to submit appeals in different forms.[39]

17. The Committee against Torture was concerned at numerous reports of abuses in custody, deaths in detention, some of which had allegedly followed torture or ill-treatment, and sexual violence against individuals deprived of liberty.[40] Regarding deaths in custody, the Human Rights Committee was concerned about the denial of adequate medical care and the lack of effective investigations.[41]

18. The same Committee was concerned about reported abuses and poor detention conditions, disproportionately affecting human rights defenders, government critics and individuals convicted for membership of Islamist parties and groups.[42] The Committee against Torture remained particularly concerned about the Jaslyk detention facility.[43]

19. The two Committees shared concerns about the lack of a national independent mechanism to monitor regularly all places of detention, and obstacles to the proper functioning of independent national and international human rights and humanitarian organizations.[44]

20. The Committee against Torture urged Uzbekistan immediately to afford in law and in practice legal safeguards against torture from the outset of detention and prosecute public officials who denied fundamental legal safeguards to persons deprived of their liberty.[45]

21. The High Commissioner suggested that Uzbekistan adopt measures to quickly resolve the continuing lack of transparency about conditions in prisons and other places of detention, with the aim of ensuring that torture and other forms of ill-treatment were halted once and for all, in line with the commitments of Uzbekistan under the Convention against Torture.[46]

22. The Human Rights Committee was concerned about the alleged practice of arbitrarily extending the soon-to-be-completed prison sentences of human rights defenders, government critics and persons convicted of religious extremism or for membership of banned Islamic movements.[47]

23. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion recommended that Uzbekistan review all cases of individuals imprisoned on vague charges related to "religious extremism", "anti-constitutional" activity or membership of an "illegal religious group", and release all prisoners of conscience. The arbitrary practice of extending jail terms must end immediately or be subject to full review and guarantee of due process. A mechanism for redress and compensation to those prisoners of conscience must also be established.[48]

24. In August 2017, the High Commissioner welcomed the release of a former United Nations employee, Erkin Musaev, 11 years after his arrest at Tashkent airport while travelling to a regional seminar. He urged Uzbekistan to release all other remaining political prisoners as soon as possible.[49]

2. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law[50]

25. The Human Rights Committee referred to the lack of security of tenure of judges, who had their term renewed by the Executive every five years.[51] Several treaty bodies recommended that Uzbekistan ensure the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary.[52]

26. The Committee against Torture and the Human Rights Committee were concerned that the Chamber of Lawyers was not sufficiently independent from the Ministry of Justice.[53] The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted with concern the requirement for lawyers to renew their licence every three years,[54] which, according to the Committee against Torture, resulted in denial of licences to several attorneys who had previously represented individuals allegedly subjected to torture.[55]

27. The Human Rights Committee urged Uzbekistan to enforce strictly habeas corpus provisions in practice.[56] The Committee against Torture recommended that it amend the Criminal Procedure Code to enable judges to apply less restrictive alternatives to detention during habeas corpus hearings, ensure the right of detainees to a lawyer of their choice in habeas corpus hearings and ensure that all habeas corpus hearings were public and accessible to independent monitors.[57]

28. The same Committee was concerned about numerous allegations that persons deprived of their liberty had been subjected to torture or ill-treatment for the purpose of compelling a forced confession.[58] The Human Rights Committee remained concerned that forced confessions had been used as evidence in court and judges had failed to investigate allegations of forced confessions.[59]

29. The two Committees were concerned about amnesties granted to persons convicted of torture or ill-treatment under article 235 of the Criminal Code. They urged Uzbekistan to end and abolish the granting of amnesties to persons convicted of such crimes.[60]

30. The Committee against Torture was concerned that Uzbekistan had not provided any compensation to victims of torture, urging it to provide redress and an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation, including full rehabilitation.[61]

31. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion recommended that all relevant State institutions and the Supreme Court provide measures to rehabilitate and reintegrate former prisoners of conscience, including by immediately and fully reinstating their civil, political, economic and social rights.[62]

32. The Human Rights Committee remained concerned about the lack of a full, independent and effective investigation into the mass killings, including of women and children, by military and security services during the 2005 Andijan events; and regretted the State's assertion that the matter had been closed.[63] The Committee against Torture remained concerned that the State had obstructed independent human rights monitoring and had not permitted any independent investigation into the events.[64] The High Commissioner stressed that victims of the Andijan events should not be forgotten and their grievances should be addressed.[65]

33. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned about the persistence and extent of corruption and recommended that Uzbekistan adopt the draft anti-corruption law, foster transparent corruption monitoring and ensure adequate investigation into corruption cases.[66]

3. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life[67]

34. The Human Rights Committee remained concerned about: legal provisions prohibiting proselytism; the reported unlawful arrest, detention, torture, ill-treatment and conviction on religious extremism-related charges of independent Muslims, Christians and members of other minority religions practising their faith outside registered structures; and the censorship and restriction of religious materials.[68] The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that only mainstream religions were permitted, such as approved Muslim, Jewish and Christian denominations, while unregistered religious activities of minorities were subject to criminal and/or administrative sanctions.[69]

35. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion noted that Uzbekistan considered itself a secular State under its Constitution but there was no clear understanding of secularism. Countering extremism and promoting intergroup tolerance and inter-ethnic harmony had been prioritized over the right to freedom of religion or belief.[70] He recommended that an open debate be held on the meaning of secularism to overcome restrictive interpretation and attitudes within the administration and law-enforcement agencies.[71]

36. He indicated that, in order to fulfil the registration requirement, religious communities needed to increase their followers. However, without the right to share one's religion freely with others, those communities would be unable to grow. The limitations had seriously violated the right to freedom of religion or belief.[72]

37. He noted that the exercise of the right to freedom of religion and belief was totally controlled by State officials, particularly the National Security Service. *Mahalla* (neighbourhood committees) also monitored the lives of citizens.[73]

38. He indicated that the government approach tended to promote "toleration", instead of the positive right to enjoy one's freedom.[74] He stressed that the move from religious tolerance to freedom of religion or belief could not be achieved without the positive recognition of other freedoms closely linked to it, such as freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association.[75]

39. He noted the acknowledgement by the Government that the 1998 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations needed substantial revision. He recommended that Uzbekistan pass a new law and new provisions on freedom of religion or belief in the Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Offences, in compliance with article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[76]

40. The Human Rights Committee was concerned about reports that freedom of expression on politically sensitive issues had been severely restricted. It urged Uzbekistan to ensure that any restrictions on freedom of expression complied with the Covenant's requirements.[77]

41. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that Uzbekistan align the provisions on registration procedures of mass media outlets in the Law on Mass Media with international standards for necessity and proportionality concerning limitations on freedom of expression;[78] decriminalize defamation;[79] assess whether current regulation of blogger information activities met

international standards;[80] and create an independent regulatory authority for allocation of broadcast licences.[81]

42. The Human Rights Committee remained concerned about reported harassment, surveillance, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officers, and prosecutions on trumped-up charges of independent journalists, government critics and dissidents, and human rights defenders, in retaliation for their work.[82] The Committee against Torture was deeply concerned that independent and effective investigations of those allegations had not taken place and regretted the State's insistence that the allegations were "unfounded".[83] It recommended that Uzbekistan provide victims with redress and release from detention imprisoned human rights defenders.[84]

43. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern that, under the Non-governmental Organizations Act, such organizations were subject to mandatory registration by the Ministry of Justice.[85] The Human Rights Committee was concerned about unreasonable, burdensome and restrictive requirements for registering political parties and public associations and about the termination of registration of international human rights organizations or other obstacles to the work of human rights non-governmental organizations.[86]

44. The Human Rights Committee was concerned that opposition political parties were denied registration and participation in elections and that the current electoral legal framework appeared not to ensure the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and to be elected, due to undue limitations.[87]

45. The same Committee was concerned about reported arbitrary restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly in law and in practice, including the disruption of peaceful assemblies by law enforcement officers and arrests, detentions, beatings and sanctioning of participants.[88]

46. It remained concerned about the exit visa system and the compulsory address/residence registration system (*propiska*) and about reports that the State had prevented human rights defenders, independent journalists or members of the political opposition from travelling abroad by delaying the issuance of exit visas.[89] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned about the implications of "*propiska*" on the ability of internal migrants to gain access to employment, housing and health care,[90] while the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was concerned about its disproportionate impact on the economic and social rights of members of ethnic groups residing outside the capital city.[91]

4. Prohibition of all forms of slavery[92]

47. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was concerned about reported trafficking of women and children, both nationals and foreigners, and recommended that Uzbekistan sanction all cases of trafficking of women and children and protect all victims.[93]

48. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Uzbekistan adopt a comprehensive approach to addressing prostitution, including the provision of shelters, reintegration programmes and alternative income-generating opportunities for women wishing to leave prostitution.[94]

49. Despite measures to reduce forced labour involving children under the age of 16 in the cotton sector,[95] the Human Rights Committee was concerned about consistent reports indicating an increase in the number of individuals above the age of 16 years and adults carrying out forced labour in the cotton and silk sectors; alleged widespread corruption and extortion; and hazardous working conditions and poor living conditions, which had even resulted in deaths.[96] The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations strongly encouraged Uzbekistan to continue to take effective and time-bound measures to strengthen safeguards against the use of forced labour in the cotton harvest, including by strengthening a functioning labour relations system for cotton pickers.[97]

50. The Committee on the Rights of the Child stressed the direct impact that the cotton industry had on the right to education for children due to the continued involvement of schoolteachers and children above the age of 16 years.[98] The ILO Committee of Experts requested the effective implementation of national legislation prohibiting compulsory labour and hazardous work for children below the age of 18 years.[99] The country team noted that a decision had been made on 8 August 2017 by the Cabinet of Ministers to prohibit the mobilization of students and civil servants, including medical workers and teachers, for cotton picking.[100]

5. Right to privacy[101]

51. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion indicated that preventive monitoring mechanisms, established by the State to prevent activities of unregistered religious organizations and ensure the compliance of citizens with the 1998 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, demonstrated the lack of respect for the right to privacy and a deficit of trust in its own citizens.[102]

C. Economic, social and cultural rights

1. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work[103]

52. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights remained concerned about underemployment, particularly among nomadic people and in the agricultural sector, high unemployment among women and widespread employment in the informal economy.[104]

53. It urged Uzbekistan to set the periodically reviewed national minimum wage at a level sufficient to provide all workers and their families with a decent standard of living and adopt the 2008 draft act on remuneration at work, containing the definition of the minimum wage.[105]

54. The same Committee noted the absence of a specific provision on the right to strike in the legislation. It urged Uzbekistan to adopt the 2007 amendments to the Act on Trade Unions, the Rights and Guarantees of Their Activity.[106]

2. Right to social security[107]

55. The country team stated that the weak social protection system had undermined its potential to tackle poverty and vulnerability effectively at the household level.[108] Uzbekistan had gradually reduced its social benefits and shrunk coverage in recent years. The social allowance for low-income families with children had been limited to families with children up to 14 years old. This restriction posed risks and incentivized young people over 14 to quit school and enter the labour market.[109]

3. Right to an adequate standard of living[110]

56. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned about a substantial proportion of the population living below the poverty line — especially in rural areas, pension cuts that had reportedly been imposed on working pensioners[111] and the level of malnutrition.[112]

57. The same Committee was concerned that farmers had been reportedly deprived of land plots, that the farmers' land tenure had not been regularized and about the low percentage of women landowners.[113]

58. On housing, especially in rural areas, the Committee recommended that Uzbekistan provide all evicted persons with alternative accommodation or adequate compensation and urged it to provide adequate housing, including social housing, especially to low-income families and disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups.[114]

59. The Committee was concerned that a substantial proportion of the population lacked access to adequate sanitation and safe drinking water, especially in the Khorezm and Karakalpakstan regions affected by the drought and the Aral Sea catastrophe.[115]

4. Right to health[116]

60. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned at the inadequate quality of maternal, perinatal and early neonatal care, resulting in high rates of newborn and maternal mortality.[117]

61. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned about the low number of hospitals and of highly qualified health-care personnel in rural areas and the absence of national health insurance.[118] The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned about the prevalence of informal fees for medical consultations and treatment, and shortages of essential medicines, equipment and hygiene materials in State health-care facilities.[119] The country team stated that Presidential Decree No. 2857 of March 2017 on improving primary health care had included a plan to decrease the number of primary health-care facilities.[120]

62. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned at the stark increase in sterilization as a contraception method and allegations of forced sterilization.[121] The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was alarmed at reported forced sterilization of Roma women and women human rights defenders.[122] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called upon Uzbekistan to adopt legislative amendments requiring women's free, prior and informed consent to sterilization, and enhance access to family planning services and affordable and safe modern contraceptives for all women and men.[123] The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination urged Uzbekistan to investigate all allegations of forced sterilization of women and provide effective remedies to victims.[124]

63. The country team noted that knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases was particularly poor among boys and rural residents.[125] The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Uzbekistan establish reproductive health as part of the mandatory school syllabus for children and that it take measures to prevent mother-to-child HIV/AIDS transmission.[126] It was also concerned about discrimination against children with HIV/AIDS.[127]

64. The country team indicated that a significant proportion of people in Uzbekistan were injecting drug users who often shared syringes, which presented a serious public health risk with respect to the transmission of blood-borne infectious diseases, particularly HIV and hepatitis C.[128]

65. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted with concern that the pollution of water, the inadequate sewage system and the contamination of soil had contributed to the increase in waterborne diseases and morbidity.[129]

5. Right to education[130]

66. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that informal fees had compromised access to education for disadvantaged children. It recommended that Uzbekistan target corruption in the education system, including by eliminating all hidden and/or informal costs.[131]

67. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned that women and girls continued to choose traditionally female-dominated fields of education and careers and that negative stereotypes of women persisted in the school curricula and textbooks.[132] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern that the percentage of female students in higher education was almost one third that of male students.[133] UNESCO recommended that Uzbekistan take additional steps to achieve gender parity in higher education and overcome barriers to non-traditional education and career paths for girls and women.[134]

68. The country team noted the disparity between urban and rural areas in the distribution of teachers in primary education.[135] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about the low quality of education and teaching personnel in rural areas and the decrease of schools providing education in minority languages, especially Kazakh and Turkmen.[136]

D. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Women[137]

69. The country team noted that no law had been adopted on equal rights and opportunities for men and women.[138] Several treaty bodies raised concerns about the lack of progress in adopting such a law.[139] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Uzbekistan perform a legislative review and adopt new legislation in line with the Convention.[140]

70. The same Committee was also concerned that there was no comprehensive national action plan to promote gender equality.[141]

71. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion noted that, while interreligious marriage was possible, there was discrimination in some matters related to religion, such as the absence of public places of worship for women and regulations on items of religious dress, such as the headscarf.[142]

72. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the disadvantaged status of women in rural areas and regretted the lack of measures to address their poverty and ensure their ownership and use of land and access to a number of rights.[143]

73. The country team stated that cases of domestic violence against women and girls were considered a private matter and underreported, and such cases were taken mainly to the *mahalla* for reconciliation. Assistance and protection services for victims were insufficient. No legislation was available on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence.[144] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women urged Uzbekistan to adopt comprehensive measures to prevent and address violence against women and girls and ensure their access to means of redress, including compensation and protection.[145]

74. The Committee against Torture was concerned that domestic violence and marital rape were not defined in criminal law.[146] Several treaty bodies urged Uzbekistan to adopt a law criminalizing domestic violence and marital rape.[147]

75. Several treaty bodies were concerned about cases of forced and early marriage and bride abductions, especially in rural areas, and the persistence of de facto polygamy, despite the legal prohibition against such practices.[148]

76. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women remained concerned that the Family Code provided for different minimum ages of marriage for girls (17 years) and boys (18 years), with the possibility of authorizing the marriage of a girl at 16 years of age, and that women were often unable to exercise their rights to an equal share in marital property.[149] The country team stated that most child marriages were not officially registered or only registered after the couple reached the legal age for marriage.[150]

77. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned at the conditions at women's detention facilities and at discrimination against and the forced sterilization, ill-treatment and abuse of women human rights defenders in detention.[151]

78. It remained concerned at the low percentage of women in political and public life.[152] The High Commissioner also noted that there were very few women in leadership roles and emphasized the importance of having more women in positions of authority and their full participation at every level.[153]

79. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Uzbekistan promote the entry of women into the formal economy, apply legislation guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value and close the gender wage gap and adopt legislation to specifically define and prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace.[154]

2. Children[155]

80. The country team noted that there was no single national mechanism for the protection of vulnerable children and that the current system lacked a coherent national strategy. The emphasis was placed on institutionalization, and family support services were almost non-existent.[156]

81. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned about the persistence of corporal punishment, which was not explicitly prohibited under the law.[157] The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that corporal punishment occurred frequently in the domestic context and in alternative care settings.[158]

82. The same Committee urged Uzbekistan to establish an effective reporting system of child abuse and neglect and ensure children's access to counselling, recovery and social reintegration.[159]

83. The Committee was concerned about limited measures against the exploitation of children, including forced labour, prostitution and pornography.[160] It was seriously concerned about the frequent use of forced labour as a form of punishment for children in government institutions, such as schools and orphanages.[161]

84. The Committee recommended that Uzbekistan revise the Criminal Code in order to criminalize the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography[162] and include the definition of sale of children in the national legislation.[163]

85. The Committee recommended that Uzbekistan develop measures for protection, assistance and recovery for children living and working in street situations, ensure their access to education and health services and prevent them from becoming victims of trafficking and economic and sexual exploitation.[164]

86. The country team indicated that Uzbekistan did not have a separate juvenile justice system and that the high workload of judges in courts of general jurisdiction, understaffing of judicial cadres and lack of specialized training for judges on child rights might lead to poor-quality judicial decisions contravening the best interests of the child.[165]

87. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned about reports of children in conflict with the law being subject to torture during interrogations and detention, inadequate measures for ensuring that they were detained in separate facilities from adult detainees, inadequate alternative measures to detention and inadequate access to education and health services.[166] It was also deeply concerned about the use of solitary cells as punishment in juvenile prisons.[167]

88. The same Committee urged Uzbekistan to register children immediately after birth and ensure that birth registration and the issuance of birth certificates were free of charge.[168]

89. The Committee recommended that Uzbekistan enact in its legislation an explicit prohibition and criminalization of the recruitment or use in hostilities by non-State armed groups of children under the age of 18.[169]

3. Persons with disabilities[170]

90. The country team stated that data on disability were produced by various State sources and were often difficult to reconcile and interpret. The national disability assessment system was based solely on a medical approach. There was no case management or social work to support persons with disabilities.[171]

91. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned about the low employment rate among persons with disabilities and physical barriers obstructing their access to social services, the labour market and education.[172]

92. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that the vast majority of children living in institutions were children with disabilities and that social and other family support services remained inadequate.[173] It was also concerned about widespread social prejudice and stigma against them, the inadequacy of measures to provide inclusive education and limited accessibility to mainstream schools and health-care services for

children and adolescents with disabilities.[174] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned about the lack of trained staff in schools and inadequate school curricula.[175] UNESCO recommended that Uzbekistan continue efforts to provide inclusive education to all children, including those with special needs.[176]

4. Minorities[177]

93. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was concerned at the absence of legislation protecting the rights of ethnic minorities and the insufficient support to promote minority languages, including the Tajik language.[178]

94. The same Committee noted the underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups, including Karakalpaks, Tatars, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Tajiks and Russians, in the judiciary and public administration. It encouraged Uzbekistan to increase the political participation of those groups and recommended that it create a mechanism for systematic consultation with their representatives.[179]

95. The Committee was concerned at the marginalized and discriminatory situation of the Luli/Roma community and reported stigmatization of and negative attitudes against them from the public and in the media.[180] It was also concerned at reported difficulties of Meskhetian Turks,[181] the inability of some members of the Karakalpak ethnic group to maintain their culture, livelihoods and traditional lifestyle and the decreasing use of the Karakalpak language.[182]

5. Refugees and asylum seekers[183]

96. The Committee against Torture was concerned that nearly 200 refugees were considered migrants.[184] The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination remained concerned at the absence of a legislative framework for the protection of refugees.[185]

97. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that the majority of asylum seekers and refugees did not possess valid national passports and/or Uzbek visas.[186] Consequently, most of them were unable to gain access to employment and public services. No local integration prospects were available even for those refugees who were married to Uzbek nationals and who had children together with them.[187] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was also concerned that stateless persons and refugees reportedly lacked access to health care, education and legal employment.[188]

98. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that there had been instances where Uzbekistan had deported persons with refugee status for having stayed in the country "illegally", without a valid visa or residency permit, and that persons in a refugee situation and married to Uzbek nationals had been denied marriage registration and residency permits.[189]

6. Stateless persons[190]

99. UNHCR indicated that the Citizenship Law did not contain adequate safeguards to prevent statelessness, including by granting citizenship when a person did not have any other nationality.[191] The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended that Uzbekistan address statelessness, including by expediting the naturalization procedure.[192]

100. UNHCR stated that the decisions of the Commission on Citizenship Issues continued to affect thousands of Uzbek nationals residing abroad, who, in the event of a loss of citizenship, became stranded in foreign countries, unable to extend or obtain Uzbek passports or return to Uzbekistan. They were also unable to obtain statelessness status in their country of residence in the absence of written confirmation from the Uzbek authorities that they were no longer considered Uzbek citizens.[193]

Notes

[1] Tables containing information on the scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies for Uzbekistan will be available at www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARegion/Pages/UZIndex.aspx.

[2] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.21–133.25, 134.4–134.8, 135.1–135.4, 136.1–136.35, 136.38 and 136.40.

[3] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 29; E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, paras. 10 and 28–29; CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 37 and 42; CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 26; CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 72; CRC/C/OPAC/UZB/CO/1, para. 24; CRC/C/OPSC/UZB/CO/1, para. 40; A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 101 (l); United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of Uzbekistan, para. 24; UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Uzbekistan p. 6 (recommendation 2); and UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Uzbekistan, p. 3. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 200–201.

[4] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 9 (e); CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, paras. 20–21; and the letter dated 26 January 2016 from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 2, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/UZB/INT_CERD_FUL_UZB_22870_E.pdf. See also CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 62 (d); CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9/Add.1, para. 38; UNHCR submission, pp. 3–4; and United Nations country team submission, para. 24.

[5] See CRC/C/OPAC/UZB/CO/1, para. 21.

[6] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 66 (d).

[7] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 26. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 187–190.

[8] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21607&LangID=E.

[9] United Nations country team submission, p. 4.

[10] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21607&LangID=E.

[11] See A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 3.

[12] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.4, 133.9–133.18, 133.20, 133.28, 133.98 and 134.1–134.3.

[13] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21607&LangID=E.

[14] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 5. See also E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 7; CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 17; CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 23; CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 7 (c); and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 11–14.

[15] See A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 101 (k).

[16] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.29, 136.37 and 136.49–136.52.

[17] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 6. See also E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 9; CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 17–26; and CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 7 (f).

[18] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 5.

[19] Ibid., para. 6.

[20] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 7. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 30–32; and A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 101 (f).

[21] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, para. 32.

[22] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.74, 133.88, 133.99 and 133.100.

[23] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 17.

[24] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7 and 133.97.

[25] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 11. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 70–75; and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.2, paras. 2–22.

[26] See A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 49.

[27] Ibid., paras. 50–51.

[28] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.19, 133.30–133.34, 134.9–134.12, 135.8, 136.39–136.42, 136.44–136.46 and 136.56.

[29] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 13. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 88–90; and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.2, paras. 23–29.

[30] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 10. See also CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 38; and CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 27–28.

[31] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 13. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 10; CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 88–90; CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.2, paras. 23–29; and CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 27–28.

[32] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.2, para. 23.

[33] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 14. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 96–110.

[34] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 7 (a). See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 14 (a); CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4,

para. 39 (a); CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 96–110; and the letter dated 29 August 2016 from the Committee against Torture to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 1, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/UZB/INT_CAT_FUL_UZB_25029_E.pdf; and CCPR/C/118/D/2317/2013.

[35] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 7 (a).

[36] Ibid., para. 23.

[37] Ibid., para. 17. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 98–101.

[38] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 14 (b). See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 96–110.

[39] See United Nations country team submission, para. 5.

[40] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, paras. 12 and 19. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 12.

[41] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 12.

[42] Ibid., para. 18.

[43] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 19.

[44] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 18, and CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 18. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 85 and 140–145; CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 63 and 102–109; CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 31–32 (a); and United Nations country team submission, para. 5.

[45] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 13. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 16; CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 56–62; and the letter dated 29 August 2016 from the Committee against Torture to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 2.

[46] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21607&LangID=E.

[47] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 17. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 133–137.

[48] See A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 101 (h).

[49] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21991&LangID=E.

[50] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.19, 133.56–133.57, 134.16 and 136.48.

[51] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 21. See also CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 7.

[52] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 21; E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 6; and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 21 (a). See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 173–179; and CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 126–144.

[53] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 14. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 21; and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, para. 186.

[54] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 7. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 14.

[55] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 14.

[56] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 15. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 15; and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 104 and 113.

[57] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 15. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 15; CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 104 and 113; and CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 76–86.

[58] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 16. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, paras. 7 and 13; and CCPR/C/119/D/2555/2015, para. 5.8.

[59] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 14. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 102–103.

[60] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 13; and CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 10. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 91–93; CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.2, para. 30; and CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 29–31.

[61] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 20. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 12; CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 14 (a); CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 117–125; and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, para. 110.

[62] See A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 101 (h).

[63] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 10. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 11.

[64] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 11.

[65] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21607&LangID=E.

[66] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 8. See also CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, paras. 14–15 and 59 (a).

[67] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.60–133.71, 134.17–134.29, 135.14, 136.43, 136.53–136.55 and 136.57–136.58.

[68] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 22.

[69] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 32.

[70] See A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 16.

[71] Ibid., para. 101 (a).

[72] Ibid., para. 48.

[73] Ibid., para. 59.

[74] Ibid., para. 92.

[75] Ibid., para. 95.

[76] Ibid., paras. 101 (b) and (f).

[77] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 23.

[78] See UNESCO submission, p. 6 (recommendation 17).

[79] Ibid., p. 6 (recommendation 18).
[80] Ibid., p. 6 (recommendation 19).
[81] Ibid., p. 6 (recommendation 20).
[82] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 23. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 8, and CCPR/C/114/D/2234/2013.
[83] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 8.
[84] Ibid., para. 8 (c)–(d). See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 12–16, and the letter dated 29 August 2016 from the Committee against Torture to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 1.
[85] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 16.
[86] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 25. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 241–256.
[87] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 26. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 259–274.
[88] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 24. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 221–238.
[89] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 20.
[90] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 9.
[91] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 18.
[92] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.39–133.54, 134.14–134.15 and 135.10–135.13.
[93] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 19.
[94] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 19 (b) and 20 (b).
[95] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 19. See also CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 65.
[96] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 19. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 22, E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 19, and CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 65 (b).
[97] See www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3300743:NO.
[98] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 59 (d).
[99] See www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3300801:NO.
[100] See United Nations country team submission, para. 12.7.
[101] For the relevant recommendation, see A/HRC/24/7, para. 133.98.
[102] See A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, paras. 61 and 66.
[103] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7 and 133.80–133.81.
[104] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 12.
[105] Ibid., para. 13.
[106] Ibid., para. 16.
[107] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7 and 133.80.
[108] See United Nations country team submission, para. 16.1.
[109] Ibid., para. 16.2.
[110] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.75–133.80 and 133.81.
[111] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 14.
[112] Ibid., para. 24.
[113] Ibid., para. 21.
[114] Ibid., para. 22.
[115] Ibid., para. 25.
[116] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.80–133.87 and 133.91.
[117] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 51 (c). See also E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 24, and United Nations country team submission, para. 17.1.
[118] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 23.
[119] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 51 (a)–(b).
[120] See United Nations country team submission, para. 17.2.
[121] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 27 (a). See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 24.
[122] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 12. See also CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 31; and CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9/Add.1, paras. 13–14.
[123] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 28 (a) and (c). See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 24; and CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 170–175.
[124] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 12. See also CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 28 (b); and the letter dated 26 January 2016 from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 1.
[125] See United Nations country team submission, para. 21.3.
[126] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, paras. 55–56 (b).
[127] Ibid., para. 55.
[128] See United Nations country team submission, para. 17.6.
[129] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 25.

[130] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.80–133.81, 133.89–133.90 and 133.92–133.94.
[131] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, paras. 59 (a) and 60 (a).
[132] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 23.
[133] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 26.
[134] See UNESCO submission, para. 14.
[135] See United Nations country team submission, para. 18.3.
[136] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 26. See also CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, paras. 59 (b) and 60 (b).
[137] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.26–133.27, 133.37, 133.59, 133.72–133.73, 133.80, 133.101, 134.13–134.14, 134.30, 135.5–135.7, 135.9 and 136.36.
[138] See United Nations country team submission, para. 11.1.
[139] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 8; CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 9 and 10 (b); and E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 11. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, para. 35.
[140] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 10 (a); and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, para. 35. See also CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, pp. 1–2; CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, para. 186; and the letter dated 15 November 2013 from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 1, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/UZB/INT_CEDAW_FUL_UZB_15777_E.pdf.
[141] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 11 and 12 (b).
[142] See A/HRC/37/49/Add.2, para. 88.
[143] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 29–30.
[144] See United Nations country team submission, para. 12.3. See also CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 17; CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 25; E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 18; and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 9.
[145] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 18 (a). See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 25; E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 18; CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 9; CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, pp. 2–8; and the letter dated 15 November 2013 from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 2.
[146] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 25.
[147] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 9; CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 10 (b) and 18 (a); and E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 18. See also CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 52–54; CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 184–186; CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, p. 5; and the letter dated 15 November 2013 from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 2.
[148] See CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 8; CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 15 and 33 (b); and E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 17.
[149] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 33 (a); and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, para. 39. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4/Add.1, para. 186.
[150] See United Nations country team submission, para. 14.1.
[151] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 31–32. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 25; and CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 12.
[152] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 21. See also E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 11.
[153] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21607&LangID=E. See also E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 11; CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 22 (a); and CCPR/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 8 (b).
[154] See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, paras. 25 (a) and (c) and 26 (a)–(b) and (d). See also E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 12.
[155] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.27, 133.38, 133.43, 133.58 and 133.80.
[156] See United Nations country team submission, para. 14.3. See also CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 47 (a).
[157] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 20.
[158] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 40.
[159] Ibid., para. 7 (g). See also United Nations country team submission, para. 14.4.
[160] See CRC/C/OPSC/UZB/CO/1, para. 22.
[161] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, paras. 38 and 39 (c).
[162] See CRC/C/OPSC/UZB/CO/1, para. 25.
[163] Ibid., para. 9. See also United Nations country team submission, para. 12.5.
[164] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, paras. 67–68 (a) and (c).
[165] See United Nations country team submission, para. 13.8.
[166] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 69 (c)–(f).
[167] Ibid., para. 38.
[168] Ibid., paras. 28–29.

[169] See CRC/C/OPAC/UZB/CO/1, para. 15.
[170] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7, 133.80 and 133.95–133.96.
[171] See United Nations country team submission, para. 20.3.
[172] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 10.
[173] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 45.
[174] Ibid., para. 49 (a) and (c)–(e).
[175] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 10.
[176] UNESCO submission, p. 6 (recommendation 2).
[177] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7 and 133.80.
[178] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 10. See also E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, paras. 9 and 26.
[179] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 14. See also CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9/Add.1, paras. 17–25, and the letter dated 26 January 2016 from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 2.
[180] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 11.
[181] Ibid., para. 13.
[182] Ibid., para. 17.
[183] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7 and 133.80.
[184] See CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 23.
[185] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 21. See also CAT/C/UZB/CO/4, para. 23.
[186] UNHCR submission, p. 2.
[187] Ibid., pp. 2–3.
[188] See E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, para. 9. See also CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, para. 61 (b).
[189] See CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, paras. 61 (a) and (c) and 62 (a)–(c).
[190] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1–133.7 and 136.20.
[191] UNHCR submission, p. 3.
[192] See CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9, para. 20. See also CERD/C/UZB/CO/8-9/Add.1, paras. 33–37, and the letter dated 26 January 2016 from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, p. 2.
[193] UNHCR submission, pp. 3–4.

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Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Uzbekistan*

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a summary of 14 stakeholders' submissions[1] to the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Information provided by stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations[2] and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies[3]

2. Amnesty International (AI) recommended the ratification of all outstanding human rights treaties, in particular OP-CAT and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.[4] It also recommended the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and enact implementing legislation.[5]

3. AI, Joint Submission 1 (JS1), and Joint Submission 2 (JS2) recommended that Uzbekistan extend a standing invitation to the special procedures.[6]

* The present document was not edited before being sent to United Nations translation services.

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B. National human rights framework[7]

4. AI stated that Uzbekistan had supported recommendations by several States to establish a national independent mechanism to monitor all places of detention and to consider complaints. However, to date, no such national independent mechanism had been established. AI noted that Uzbekistan had also supported such recommendations during its 2008 UPR review, but without taking action on them.[8]

C. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination[9]

5. JS1 stated that there were a number of laws that clearly discriminated against women. In particular, the law allowed child marriage, as the Family Code set the marital age for girls at 17 (with the possibility to be lowered to 16 years). Not appearing in the statistics of marriages were minors who married in a religious ceremony ("Nikah"). Furthermore, family laws did not provide women with any legal rights in case of divorce. In addition, Uzbek law set an earlier retirement age for women, i.e. 55 years, while it was 60 for men, which disadvantaged women since the pension was calculated on the basis of years worked and pay earned during these years. Moreover, maternity leave did not count towards pension.[10] CAGSAN recommended that Uzbekistan equate the marriageable age for men and women to the age of adulthood (18 years).[11]

6. JS1 noted that, during the UPR in 2013, Uzbekistan had rejected recommendations on the decriminalization of consensual sex conduct between men.[12]

7. Central Asian Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Network (CAGSAN) noted that LGBT people were most often subjected to beatings; insults; discrimination in the workplace; and persecution. They faced threats, attacks, denial of available services, including denial of adequate medical care; property damage; slander; and rape attempts on the basis of their sexual orientation. According to CAGSAN, law enforcement, judicial and other authorities did not provide adequate protection to victims of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.[13]

8. CAGSAN recommended that Uzbekistan enact legislation on hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity and thoroughly investigate and prosecute all acts of violence against vulnerable groups, including LGBTI persons; and implement awareness-raising programmes and trainings on violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity for law enforcement, judicial and other authorities.[14]

Human rights and counter-terrorism[15]

9. AI stated that the authorities had continued to secure the return – including through extradition proceedings – of numerous Uzbek citizens whom they had identified as threats to the "constitutional order" or threats to national security. Often, the Government had offered "diplomatic assurances" to sending States to secure their returns, pledging free access to detention centres for independent monitors and diplomats. In practice, however, they had not honoured these guarantees.[16]

10. According to AI, officers of the National Security Service (NSS) continued secret renditions of individuals from abroad. Many of those abducted or otherwise forcibly returned to Uzbekistan had been subjected to incommunicado detention, often in

undisclosed locations, and tortured or otherwise ill-treated to force them to confess or incriminate others.[17]

11. AI indicated that the authorities had also increased pressure on the relatives of those suspected or convicted of crimes against the State, including individuals working or seeking protection abroad. The authorities had also used the threat of bringing charges of membership of a banned Islamist group against a detained relative to prevent their families from exposing human rights violations or seeking help from human rights organizations at home or abroad.[18]

2. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person[19]

12. JS1 stated that the Government had not made any noticeable progress in combating torture and failed to implement recommendations received at the last UPR in 2013. Furthermore, the President's 2017-2021 Action Strategy did not address torture. Despite UPR recommendations, article 235 of the Criminal Code still did not contain all elements of the definition of torture as required by article 1 of CAT.[20] Article 235 did not cover acts by "other persons acting in an official capacity", including those acts that resulted from the investigation, consent or acquiescence of a public official.[21]

13. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE-ODIHR) recommended extending the definition of torture to acts or omissions committed by "other persons acting in an official capacity" so that it would apply to a wide range of professionals. It also recommended explicitly including discrimination among the list of purposes for inflicting torture and excluding the application of general provisions of the Criminal Code pertaining to defences, amnesties and pardons, as well as statutes of limitations, to the criminal offense of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.[22]

14. Freedom Now (FN) recommended that Uzbekistan amend criminal legislation, including article 235 of the Criminal Code, to ensure that the definition of torture fully complies with article 7 of ICCPR, article 5 of UDHR and article 1 of CAT.[23] JS1 made a similar recommendation.[24]

15. AI stated that, despite some positive changes to national legislation, such as the October 2016 and February 2017 Presidential Decrees on legal and judicial reform and the September 2016 amendments to the Law on Internal Affairs Agencies, there were continuous reports of routine and pervasive torture and other ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners.[25]

16. AI noted that, since the last review, the authorities had continued to categorically deny reports of torture and other ill-treatment by law enforcement officials. In October 2016, the Director of the National Centre for Human Rights wrote to AI, asserting that torture allegations contained in its reports were based on fabricated evidence. However, according to AI, human rights defenders, former prisoners and relatives of prisoners continued to provide credible information that police and NSS officers routinely used torture to coerce suspects, detainees and prisoners. Individuals charged with or convicted of anti-state and terrorism-related offences were particularly vulnerable to torture both in pre-trial detention and in prison following conviction.[26]

17. FN recommended that Uzbekistan ensure that prison conditions comply with international standards, particularly with regard to access to medical care, nutritious food and clean water and comfortable temperatures; and promptly and independently investigate all abuses and deaths in custody, and hold the perpetrators accountable.[27]

18. AI noted the practice of arbitrarily extending prison terms, including for alleged minor infractions of prison rules under article 221 of the Criminal Code, which had led to many prisoners serving de facto indefinite sentences, especially those convicted of anti-State offences.[28] Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated that prison authorities had continued in 2017 to use this article to arbitrarily extend the sentences of political prisoners.[29] The Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (UGF) made similar observations and indicated that sentences under article 221 were disproportionate to the alleged offenses and imposed without due process.[30] FN recommended that Uzbekistan ensure that article 221 of the Criminal Code was not arbitrarily applied to extend prison sentences of or deny amnesty eligibility to prisoners.[31]

19. HRW indicated that Uzbekistan had yet to fulfill the long-standing recommendation to close Jaslyk prison and continued to house persons imprisoned on politically-motivated charges there. HRW also noted that, since 2013, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had not carried out independent monitoring of prisons and places of detention, due to an inability to carry out visits to prison facilities and with prisoners in accordance with its modalities and free of government interference.[32] AI made similar observations.[33]

20. UGF mentioned the cases of punitive psychiatry where the Government forcibly committed human rights activists and independent journalists to psychiatric hospitals for their activities critical of the Government.[34]

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law[35]

21. JS1 stated that the judiciary was highly dependent on the executive power when it came to appointment and dismissal of judges, their assessment, and financial resources.[36] In 2017, several amendments to existing legislation were introduced in order to address the deficiencies of the judicial system. A new Supreme Judicial Council was formed for the appointment of judges, however, it was not independent. Although it was comprised of judges, members had to be presented to the Parliament and approved by the President of Uzbekistan.[37] AI expressed similar concern.[38]

22. JS1 continued that court hearings were unbalanced and privileged towards the Prosecution Office (Procuracy), as the role of defence lawyers was extremely insignificant. Procuracy, which was part of the executive branch, dominated over the judiciary system and highly affected the fairness of trials.[39]

23. Joint Submission 3 (JS3) noted that lack of transparency of the judicial system contributed to corruption and manipulation of the administration of justice. There was no publicly accessible database of court verdicts and other documents. Courts did not use stenographers or other means to record proceedings. Court clerks often did not take notes at all. There was a widespread perception among the population that courts were not independent and that many cases were decided by "telephone justice." Judges received instruction from the prosecutor or NSS on the outcome of cases for reasons related to repression and corruption.[40]

24. UGF stated that, in 2008, the Government had abolished the independent bar associations and banned the formation of any such associations. It established a single Chamber of Lawyers with mandatory membership for all licensed lawyers.[41] JS1 noted that the Chamber became part of the Ministry of Justice. A legislative change in 2009 required lawyers to undergo recertification every three years. However, such exams were misused by the Government as it disbarred many independent lawyers, who had brought before courts politically sensitive cases, including torture cases.[42] UGF indicated that some lawyers refused to take politically-sensitive cases for fear of disbarment.[43]

25. UGF reported that prisoners facing charges under article 221 (infractions of prison rules) of the Criminal Code were denied due process and did not have the opportunity to seek independent legal assistance. Relatives of prisoners were often not informed of the charges and could not hire independent lawyers or attend proceedings.[44]

26. AI stated that the authorities failed to conduct effective investigations into the allegations of torture, and impunity for the perpetrators prevailed.[45] The courts continued to rely heavily on torture-tainted "confessions" to hand down convictions.[46] JS1 stated that torture was perpetrated with almost complete impunity and remained a routine practice during investigation.[47]

27. FN reported about abuses and deaths in custody and recommended that Uzbekistan provide adequate compensation and rehabilitation to victims.

28. HRW indicated that Uzbekistan had rejected recommendations from the previous UPR cycles to allow an independent international investigation into the May 2005 Andijan massacre and its fallout. More than twelve years after the Andijan massacre of May 2005, no one had been held accountable. The Government continued to relentlessly persecute those it suspected of having ties to the protest and refused to allow an international investigation. The Government also continued to intimidate and harass the families remaining in Uzbekistan of Andijan survivors who had sought refuge abroad.[48] JS2 expressed similar concern and stated that, according to officials, 187 people had been killed in the Andijan massacre, but unofficial estimates put the number at between 500 and 1,500.[49]

29. JS1 stated that corruption remained extremely widespread and affected all levels of the Government, education, healthcare, and other public services. Citizens had to pay bribes or give presents for even the most basic public services. Anti-corruption policies and laws were weak and ineffective, as they only included corruption related to receipt of material benefits but not non-material benefits such as favours. Officials working for the Government were not required to declare their assets and earnings.[50]

30. JS3 stated that the Ministry of Finance controlled the flow of expenditures and income for cotton and cotton seed production through the *Selkhozfond*, a non-transparent, extra-budgetary fund controlled by a small circle of government elites.[51]

31. According to JS3, the system of cotton production was permeated with various corruption schemes. There existed a system of corrupt illegal relations between local authorities and farmers, between farmers and government agencies controlling them, and between farmers and providers of services and resources. People who could not or did not want to work in the cotton field must pay for a replacement worker to pick cotton in their name or make bribe payments directly to their supervisor or local official. The scale of bribes and various unrecorded payments was enormous.[52]

Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life[53]

32. ADF International stated that government restrictions and surveillance of religious organizations and their activities violated not only article 61 of the Constitution but also article 18 of ICCPR.[54] Forum 18 noted that officials monitored and attempted to control all exercise of freedom of religion and belief. The NSS secret police carried out both covert and open surveillance of all religious communities. According to Forum 18, members of a variety of religious communities told Forum 18 about hidden microphones in places of worship, the presence of NSS agents during meetings for worship, and the recruitment of spies within communities – including among leaders.[55]

33. HRW stated that the authorities highly regulated religious worship, clothing, the sermons delivered by imams, and banned all forms of proselytism. Peaceful religious

believers were often branded as "religious extremists." The Government maintained a "black list"—made up of thousands of individuals suspected of belonging to unregistered or extremist groups—whereby those on the list were barred from various jobs and travel and must report regularly for interrogations with the police.[36]

34. HRW continued that, in August 2017, the authorities had announced a reduction of the total number of people on the "black list" from 17,582 to 1,352. President Mirziyoyev emphasized the need to rehabilitate citizens who had been "misled" by radical groups. According to HRW, however, thousands of religious believers—religious Muslims who practiced their religion outside strict state controls—remained imprisoned on vague charges of extremism.[37]

35. Forum 18 indicated that Muslims, Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses were frequently targeted by ordinary police and "Anti-Terrorism Police" for illegal searches of homes without a search warrant. For Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses, fines of between 50 and 350 times the monthly minimum wage, and sometimes, imprisonment of between 3 and 21 days could follow for possessing religious literature, meeting together for worship, and the study of religious texts. Muslims could also face long jail terms.[38]

36. According to Forum 18, the Government was most interested in controlling the Muslim community, and through the state-controlled Spiritual Administration of Muslims, or *Muftiate*, it also controlled what imams preached, and the number and location of mosques. The State completely controlled the selection, education and nomination of imams.[39] Ramadan each year saw strict controls on Islamic communities. In the 2016 Ramadan, the Government banned shared Muslim *iftar* (breaking of fast) meals in public in the capital Tashkent. The bans also appeared to have covered the three-day Ramazon *hayit* (*Id al-fitr*) festival. The Government also continued to ban people under 18 from attending mosques.[40]

37. Forum 18 continued that restrictions on how many pilgrims could take part in the annual haj pilgrimage to Mecca were severe. Only 7,200 out of a potential quota of about 30,000 allocated to Uzbekistan (based on the number of the Muslim population) travelled on the 2017 pilgrimage.[41] Pilgrims were officially screened by the *Mahalla* (local district) committee, NSS secret police, *Muftiate*, and the Religious Affairs Committee. The Government also used exit visas to control which of its citizens were allowed to leave the country.[42]

38. Forum 18 indicated that communities of all faiths must pass through a complex registration procedure.[43] Registration of new communities, or communities which had long existed but which the Government did not like – such as Jehovah's Witnesses – remained almost impossible. Furthermore, being granted registration did not guarantee that a community would keep registration and stay open. Some Protestant, Jehovah's Witness, Hare Krishna and Baha'i communities had been stripped of registration for an unknown reason.[44]

39. Forum 18 noted that the import and production of religious literature – including the Koran and the Bible - was strictly controlled, with compulsory prior censorship by the Religious Affairs Committee. Materials in electronic form of all faiths were also targeted.[45] Religious literature was routinely confiscated in police raids on places of worship and private homes and then destroyed.[46]

40. JS2 indicated that, during its UPR 2nd circle review, Uzbekistan had accepted 14 recommendations on the freedom of expression and access to information. Among others, Uzbekistan pledged to "Ensure media freedom, including Internet freedom, by eliminating all restrictions to the activities of independent media and human rights organizations",[47] However, according to JS2, Uzbekistan had not taken effective measures to even partially

implement the majority of those recommendations.[68] JS2 recommended that Uzbekistan bring defamation laws into line with article 19 of the ICCPR.[69]

41. JS stated that, in 2017, some steps had been taken towards increased press freedom. In April 2017, State television aired live discussions of current problems. However, the programme was taken off air after the Prime Minister was criticised.[70] Reporters without Borders International (RSF-RWB) made similar observations.[71]

42. RSF-RWB continued that cyber-censorship had also become more refined and was no longer limited to the blocking of websites. The authorities maintained a tight grip on the Internet, blocking access not only to independent news websites but also to censorship circumvention tools and many instant messaging apps. Internet service providers and mobile phone operators were instructed to monitor the activities of clients and alert the authorities when "suspect" messages were circulated. The state-owned Uztelecom company continued to control all Internet access.[72] JS2 and HRW made similar observations.[73]

43. CAGSAN stated that, in 2014, Uzbekistan issued a decree on video surveillance of the activities of Internet café visitors and the transfer of this information to employees of the internal affairs agencies and employees of NSS. In this regard, in March 2014, LGBT activists had to close their LGBT-oriented website and forum for security purposes.[74]

44. JS2 indicated that access to Uzbekistan remained restricted for individuals living abroad who had previously been blacklisted by the security services.[75] The authorities used the internet and social media to harass foreign independent journalists and human rights defenders living in exile.[76] RSF-RWB stated that at least ten journalists were still in jail and the intelligence services continued to pursue Uzbek independent journalists even after they had left the country.[77] It indicated that independent journalists were at risk of being imprisoned for covering sensitive topics such as forced labour in cotton farming, corruption or environmental issues. Trumped-up charges such as "extremism," "extortion" and "drug smuggling" were often brought against them.[78]

45. JS2 stated that Uzbekistan received nine recommendations on the freedom of association and creating an enabling environment for CSOs. It committed to ensuring "that civil society organizations and NGOs can work freely and unhindered".[79] However, JS2 indicated that Uzbekistan had failed to even partially implement the majority of them.[80]

46. JS1 stated that still no independent national or international NGO formally existed, after the Government mandated a process of re-registration for NGOs in the aftermath of the 2005 Andijan massacre.[81] HRW stated that civil society continued to operate under tight restrictions and no independent domestic human rights organization had been allowed to register. Additionally, a June 2015 law strictly regulated the activities of NGOs, requiring an onerous and burdensome process of receiving prior approval from the Ministry of Justice of at least one month before conducting virtually any activity.[82] CAGSAN raised similar concern.[83] According to JS2, registration processes were bureaucratic and costly, and applications were sometimes left unanswered.[84] An Order passed in June 2016 introduced tight controls on the foreign funding of international and domestic CSOs operating in Uzbekistan.[85]

47. AI deeply regretted Uzbekistan's rejection of UPR recommendations to release human rights defenders and those detained on politically motivated charges claiming that such information was "factually wrong".[86] JS2 also remained deeply concerned by the ongoing politically-motivated imprisonment of human rights defenders, independent journalists and critics of the authorities, and ongoing incidents of persecution, harassment and threats.[87] Such people were routinely subjected to travel restrictions, police interrogations, arbitrary arrests and, in some cases, wrongful imprisonment.[88]

48. According to JS2, since the last UPR review, journalists and human rights activists had been detained and charged with administrative violations for alleged "hooliganism" and for allegedly failing to seek state approval for their activities.[89] Journalists and human rights activists had been forced to leave Uzbekistan following threats of prosecution in retaliation for their work.[90] UGF also noted that activists who had cooperated with it in monitoring forced labour had suffered reprisals.[91]

49. HRW noted that the administration of President Mirziyoyev had slightly relaxed restrictions on the holding of modest peaceful demonstrations. But the activities of critical voices, including independent rights activists, journalists, and lawyers, were still largely suppressed.[92]

50. JS1 stated that no members of opposition parties or independent candidate had been allowed to participate in the presidential election in 4 December 2016.[93] According to OSCE-ODIHR, the presidential election of 4 December 2016 had underscored the need of comprehensive reform to address long-standing systemic shortcomings. The dominant position of state actors and limits on fundamental freedoms undermined political pluralism and led to a campaign devoid of genuine competition. OSCE-ODIHR recommended the review of limitations on fundamental rights; harmonization of various electoral laws; and the removal of restrictions on the rights of individuals to vote and run as candidates. It also recommended establishing and strictly implementing clear and open procedures for the counting of votes and amending the electoral legal framework to allow observation by non-partisan civil society organizations and filing of complaints by voters, parties, candidates and observers on any aspect of the electoral process.[94]

51. OSCE-ODIHR also stated that the December 2014 parliamentary elections lacked genuine electoral competition and debate and recommended measures to increase transparency and public confidence. It called for a concerted effort by election officials, political parties and civil society to address practices of multiple, proxy and group voting, which contravened the principles of equal suffrage and secrecy of the vote.[95]

52. JS3 stated that Uzbekistan systematically violated the right to freedom of movement through its Soviet-era *propiska* system by which citizens, residents, and visitors must register their permanent or temporary residence, and the requirement for citizens to obtain an exit visa to travel abroad.[96] Law enforcement agencies harassed and questioned people who had returned from abroad, and interrogated the relatives of people who were out of the country. Law enforcement and *Mahalla* officials conducted interviews and reported to the NSS. Police required returning travellers, especially women, to undergo interviews at the police station, explain where they travelled and justify the purpose of the trip.[97]

53. According to JS3, *propiska* in fact operated as a permit system in which the State exerted control over people's place of residence and imposed significant burdens on attempts to change residence. It also facilitated a bribery scheme because many individuals must pay bribes to officials at the Ministry of Interior to receive proper registration. It was especially difficult to obtain valid residency permits in Tashkent, the Tashkent region, as well as several other major cities, restricting people's ability to find employment in urban areas.[98]

54. JS3 noted that, in the last UPR, Uzbekistan rejected recommendation 136.53[99] to eliminate the exit visa system and explained that it was not part of its internationally recognized human rights obligations.[100]

55. JS2 indicated that those who criticised the authorities often had their freedom of movement restricted.[101] People had previously been imprisoned on politically motivated charges found it impossible to obtain permission to leave Uzbekistan after their release from prison.[102] AI was particularly concerned that former prisoners had been prevented from travelling abroad for urgent medical treatment.[103] JS1 noted that a law adopted in 2011

provided an extensive list of grounds for exit visa refusal that included possessing state secrets, criminal proceedings or nonfulfillment of a court order.[104]

56. According to JS3, on July 11, 2017, President Mirziyoev signed a decree to introduce new international passports to replace the exit visa regime. JS3 noted, however, that the Government could still use the proposed international passport system to restrict improperly the freedom of movement of citizens for political reasons and to extract bribe payment.[105] Furthermore, Uzbekistan had already introduced new, fully biometric passports in 2011 that conformed to international standards for identity documents, and therefore, JS3 stated that the Government had failed to make clear why citizens should be required to obtain a second passport for foreign travel or how the documents would differ.[106]

Prohibition of all forms of slavery[107]

57. HRW indicated that forced labor in the cotton sector during the years since the 2013 UPR had been systematic, both during the spring weeding season and the fall cotton harvest.[108] Joint Submission 4 (JS4) indicated that, since 2013, the Government continued to force citizens to harvest cotton as part of its state-controlled system of cotton production. Despite the Government's increased engagement with the International Labour Organization, the number of Uzbek adults forced to harvest cotton increased in 2015 and 2016 because of the decline in forced child labour.[109]

58. According to JS4, the State-run mobilization campaign largely targeted public sector employees, people receiving welfare and child benefits, and students who were forced into the fields under the threat of losing jobs, social benefits, or university placements.[110] HRW made similar observations.[111] JS4 noted that, in 2017, many citizens reported being forced by their supervisors or local officials to sign declarations that they agreed to pick cotton "voluntarily" and agreed to dismissal or expulsion if they failed to participate in the harvest or meet their picking quota.[112]

59. According to HRW, in August 2017, the Government issued a public decree banning the mobilization of public sector workers, including teachers and medical personnel, to pick cotton. In September 2017, there were reports that the Government had taken steps to curtail the mobilization of college students, teachers, and medical personnel, but HRW stated that it was unclear to what extent these efforts were consistent across the regions of Uzbekistan. Reports had also been received that, in some regions, if teachers or medical personnel did not want to work in the fields, they had to make a financial contribution to hire a worker to replace them.[113] JS3 and JS4 made similar observations.[114]

60. JS4 noted that the Government had not yet taken steps to dismantle the production quota system of centralized control, which created pressure on local officials to resort to forced labour to meet otherwise hard-to-reach objectives.[115] JS4 urged Uzbekistan to bring an end to the cotton quotas that forced farmers to produce cotton and the labour quotas that forced local administrators to coercively mobilize Uzbek citizens into cotton fields.[116]

3. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to health[117]

61. CAGSAN stated that HIV-related services were under the close scrutiny of the State, and as a result, some MSM (Men who have sex with men) did not receive medical services and information on the prevention and treatment of HIV and STIs (sexually transmitted infections). It expressed concern about the lack of compulsory sex education in schools, which was considered to be contrary to "national values".[118]

4. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women[119]

62. JS1 stated that the role of women was primarily as a mother and caregiver, rather than an active member of society.[120] JS1 furthermore noted that, in 2016, in order to respond to the dramatic rise of divorces in Tashkent, the mayor of Tashkent had introduced reconciliation committees run by *Mahallas*. It was a quasi-judicial body comprised of members of *Mahalla* with the purpose of preserving family and preventing divorces. Since 2016, no court in Tashkent accepted writs for divorce without a conclusion of a reconciliation committee. In the vast majority of cases, couples had to refer to the *Mahallas* in the neighbourhood of the husband's family. Meetings of the reconciliation committee were typically of accusatory character and blamed the woman for attempting to destroy her family and violating patriarchal norms of the Uzbek society.[121]

63. JS1 stated that domestic violence was still not properly addressed in legislation and that Uzbekistan lacked a comprehensive system responding to domestic violence cases. There was no legal definition of domestic violence or violence against women, and officials used the term "family conflict."[122] CAGSAN noted that the Criminal Code did not consider domestic violence a crime and did not prohibit it.[123]

64. CAGSAN indicated that LGBT people were often subjected to domestic violence and that LGBT women were more vulnerable. Some of them were beaten by their relatives after voluntary coming-out or forced outing. Others were thrown out of the homes or put under house arrest. The abuse by relatives had led to suicide attempts in some cases. There were reported cases of corrective rape of lesbians by brothers.[124]

65. Forum 18 stated that women exercising their freedom of religion and belief were particularly vulnerable to targeting by male officials in the highly patriarchal society, and there were strong social pressures against women speaking out about such human rights violations.[125] Forum 18 indicated that assaults, including the use of sexual violence by male officials, appeared to be common and were known to have been experienced by Muslim, Protestant and Jehovah's Witness women. Men exercising their freedom of religion and belief had also been threatened by police with being forced to witness their wives being raped.[126]

66. JS3 stated that girls and women under age 35 attempting to receive exit visas are required to undergo an interview and receive "permission" from their parents or, if they were married, from their husbands or parents-in-law before receiving an exit visa. Parents, husbands, or in-laws must guarantee that their daughter or wife would not enter into prostitution.[127] JS1 made similar observations.[128]

67. CAGSAN noted cases of women who had been subjected to forced sterilization in the Tashkent region and recommended Uzbekistan take all necessary measures, including the adoption of legislation, to prohibit forced sterilization of women.[129]

Children[130]

68. Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (GIEACPC) noted that, since 2013, Uzbekistan had repeatedly declared that corporal punishment was prohibited in all settings, in particular referring to the 2014 Guardianship and Custody Act. However, according to GIEACPC, this Act did not explicitly prohibit corporal punishment.[131] It was unlawful in schools, penal institutions and as a sentence for a crime, while it was still lawful in the home and in alternative care and day care settings. GIEACPC indicated that the Domestic Violence Bill and the potential amendments to the Family Code would provide opportunities for enacting an explicit prohibition of corporal punishment of children in all settings.[132]

Notes

[1] The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org.

Civil society

Individual submissions:

ADF International	ADF International, Geneva (Switzerland);
AI	Amnesty International, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
CAGSAN	Central Asian Gender and Sexuality Advocacy Network, Tashkent (Uzbekistan);
FN	Freedom Now, Washington DC (United States of America);
Forum 18	Forum 18, Oslo (Norway);
GIEACPC	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
HRW	Human Rights Watch, Geneva (Switzerland);
RSF-RWB	Reporters Without Borders International, Paris (France);
UGF	Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights, Berlin (Germany).

Joint submissions:

JS1	**Joint submission 1 submitted by**: World Organization against Torture (OMCT) and Uzbek League for Human Rights (ULHR);
JS2	**Joint submission 2 submitted by**: CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) and Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA);
JS3	**Joint submission 3 submitted by:** Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights (UFG), Stated Crime Initiative (SCI), and Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre);
JS4	**Joint submission 4 submitted by**: Anti-Slavery, Cotton Campaign, International Labor Rights Forum, Responsible Sourcing Network, and Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights.

Regional intergovernmental organization(s):

OSCE-ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights/Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (Warsaw) Poland.

[2] The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:

UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT.

[3] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.6-7, 133.21-25, 134.4-8, 135.1-4, 136.1-35, 136.38, and 136.40-41.

[4] AI, p. 7. See also Freedom Now (FN), para. 31.i).

[5] AI, p. 7.

[6] AI, p. 7. / JS1, p. 11. / JS2, para. 6.5.

[7] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.2, 133.4-5, 133.9-15, 133.20, 133.28, 133.98, 134.1-3.

[8] AI, p. 2.

[9] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.29 and 136.49-52.

[10] JS1, p. 7.

[11] CASGAN, para. 16, and recommendation g).

[12] JS1, p.9.

[13] CASGAN, para. 12.

[14] CASGAN, p. 5, recommendations c) and d).
[15] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.97.
[16] AI, p. 5.
[17] AI, p. 5.
[18] AI, p. 5.
[19] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.30-31, 133.33-36, 136.44-46, 134.9-12, 135.8, 136.39, 136.42, and 136.56.
[20] JS1, p. 5.
[21] JS1, p. 5.
[22] OSCE-ODHIR, p. 4.
[23] Freedom Now, para. 31 i).
[24] JS1, p. 12.
[25] HRW, p. 1.
[26] HRW, pp. 4-5.
[27] Freedom Now, para. 31 j).
[28] AI, p. 5.
[29] HRW, p. 2.
[30] UGF, para. 13.
[31] Freedom Now, para.31 e).
[32] HRW, p. 2.
[33] AI, p. 6.
[34] UGF, paras. 19-22.
[35] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.55-57, 134.16, and 136.48.
[36] JS1, p. 4.
[37] JS1, p. 5.
[38] AI, pp. 3-4.
[39] JS1, p. 5.
[40] JS3, p. 4.
[41] UGF, para. 9.
[42] JS1, p. 5.
[43] UGF, para. 11.
[44] UGF, para. 14.
[45] AI, p. 1.
[46] AI, pp. 4-5.
[47] JS1, p. 6.
[48] HRW, p. 6.
[49] JS2, para. 5.3.
[50] JS1, p. 4.
[51] JS3, paras. 10 and 12.
[52] JS3, paras. 15-16.
[53] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.60-71, 134.17-29, 134.57-58, 134.64, 135.14, 136.37, 136.43, and 136.53-55.
[54] ADF International, para. 7.
[55] Forum 18, para. 6.
[56] HRW, p. 4.
[57] HRW, p. 4. See also JS2, para. 3.11.
[58] Forum 18, para. 12.
[59] Forum 18, para. 14.
[60] Forum 18, para. 15.
[61] Forum 18, para. 16.
[62] Forum 18, para. 17.
[63] Forum 18, para. 18.
[64] Forum 18, para. 20.
[65] Forum 18, para. 22.
[66] Forum 18, para. 23.
[67] See A/HRC/24/7, para.134.27 (Estonia).

[68] JS2, para. 4.1.
[69] JS2, para. 6.3.
[70] JS2, para. 4.3.
[71] RSF-RWB, p. 3.
[72] RSF-RWB, p. 3.
[73] HRW, p. 3. / JS2, para. 4.5.
[74] CASGAN, para. 11.
[75] JS2, para. 4.6.
[76] JS2, para. 4.7.
[77] RSF-RWB, p. 1.
[78] RSF-RWB, p. 1.
[79] See A/HRC/24/7, para. 134.25 (Germany).
[80] JS2, para. 2.1.
[81] JS1, p. 2.
[82] HRW, p. 3. See also JS2, para. 2.4.
[83] CASGAN, para. 9.
[84] JS2, para. 2.4.
[85] JS2, para. 2.5.
[86] AI, p. 1.
[87] JS2, para. 1.6.
[88] JS2, para. 3.2.
[89] JS2, para. 3.8.
[90] JS2, para. 3.9.
[91] UGF, para. 8.
[92] HRW, p. 3.
[93] JS1, p. 1.
[94] OSCE-ODHIR, p. 2.
[95] OSCE-ODHIR, p. 3.
[96] JS3, para. 19.
[97] JS3, para. 20.
[98] JS3, para. 21.
[99] Eliminate the system of exit visas for those wishing to travel abroad (Chile), para. 136.53, A/HRC/24/7.
[100] JS3, para. 24.
[101] JS2, para. 3.13.
[102] JS2, para. 3.15.
[103] AI, p. 6.
[104] JS1, p. 10.
[105] JS3, para. 25.
[106] JS3, para. 26.
[107] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.39-54 and 135.10-13.
[108] HRW, p. 5. See also JS4, para. 5. / JS3, para. 10.
[109] JS4, para. 4.
[110] JS4, para. 6.
[111] HRW, p. 5.
[112] JS4, para. 7.
[113] HRW, p. 5.
[114] JS3, para. 15. / JS4, para. 9. See also JS4, para. 11.
[115] JS4, para. 10.
[116] JS4, para. 15.
[117] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.81-83, 133.85-86, and 133.91.
[118] CASGAN, paras. 19-20.
[119] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7, 133.26-27, 133.37, 133.59, 133.72-73, 134.13-14, 134.30, 135.5-7, 135.9, and 136.36.
[120] JS1, p. 7.
[121] JS1, p. 8.

[122] JS1, p. 8.
[123] CASGAN, para. 17 and recommendation h).
[124] CASGAN, para. 17 and recommendation h).
[125] Forum 18, para. 4.
[126] Forum 18, para. 4.
[127] JS3, para.
[128] JS1, p. 10.
[129] CASGAN, para. 14.
[130] For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/24/7, paras. 133.1-7 and 133.38.
[131] GIEACPC, p. 1.
[132] GIEACPC, p. 2.